

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 715

CS 509 506

AUTHOR Vartabedian, Robert A.; Vartabedian, Laurel Klinger
TITLE The Role of the Reviewer and Other Ethical/Logical
Considerations: A Rejoinder to Paul Harper.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 6p.; Originally published in Journal of the Oklahoma
Speech-Theatre-Communication Association, Fall 1985.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis; *Criticism; Ethics; *Evaluation Methods;
Research Methodology; Scholarly Journals; *Scholarship;
*Standards
IDENTIFIERS *Reviewers

ABSTRACT

This paper questions Paul Harper's Fall 1984 "Journal of the Oklahoma Speech-Theatre-Communication Association" response to an article entitled "The 'Daily Oklahoman' and Persuasion in the Early 1980 Presidential Campaign." The paper argues that the response to the original article has two fundamental problems: (1) it raises some ethical questions about the role of a reviewer, and (2) the reviewers' overall logic is considerably weakened by recurring "straw man" arguments. The paper considers these issues and makes some conclusions. (Author/NKA)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

THE ROLE OF THE REVIEWER AND OTHER ETHICAL/LOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A REJOINDER TO PAUL HARPER

by

Robert A. Vartabedian

Wichita State University

and

Laurel Klinger Vartabedian

Wichita State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Burt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Robert A. Vartabedian and Laurel Klinger Vartabedian received the Ph.D.
from the University of Oklahoma in 1981. They are currently Assistant
Professors of Speech Communication at Wichita State University.

Mailing address: 2323 Bromfield Circle, Wichita, KS 67226

Telephone number: (316) 684-5946

ABSTRACT

Paul Harper's fall 1984 JOSTCA response to "The Daily Oklahoman and Persuasion in the Early 1980 Presidential Campaign" has two fundamental problems. First, it raises some ethical questions about the role of the reviewer. Second, his overall logic is considerably weakened by recurring "straw man" arguments.

THE ROLE OF THE REVIEWER AND OTHER ETHICAL/LOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A REJOINDER TO PAUL HARPER

In the fall 1984 issue of the Journal of the Oklahoma Speech-Theatre-Communication Association, Paul Harper chose to write and concurrently publish a response to our article: "The Daily Oklahoman and Persuasion in the Early 1980 Presidential Campaign." Such a response, in and of itself, is always a possible aftermath in the ritual of scholarship. However, the manner in which this particular response transpired was highly inappropriate. We would like to discuss some of the ethical as well as logical problems inherent in Harper's response.

As the authors of the original article, we were entitled to know the true nature of Harper's dissatisfaction with our essay prior to a published response. Instead, we were told by the editor of this issue that Harper (who initially was acting as a journal reviewer) was to write a brief response more of clarification than indictment. After repeated attempts to receive a copy of the actual journal, we finally obtained one more than two months after its initial distribution.

We also believe that Harper's detailed response was not an appropriate one in light of his role as a journal reviewer. Our experience with journal reviewers is that they are in a "constructive" critical role. Specifically, they are to assess manuscripts as acceptable, unacceptable, or in need of revision. Harper and his fellow reviewers chose to accept this article while allowing a reviewer (Harper) to put forth a rather extended response. If the true purpose of a journal is to promulgate scholarship, this is not the proper way to proceed.

A final ethical matter to consider is the seemingly confused rationale for publishing our article in the first place. Moreover, if our article/content analysis was "flawed in two major ways" as argued by respondent Harper, why in the world would reviewer Harper allow it to be published? Whether one is involved in publishing a state, regional, national, or international journal, we contend that the preceeding ethical matters need to be taken into consideration.

Paul Harper's response is further weakened by his recurring use of "straw man" arguments. Throughout his response, he inaccurately restates our initial position, and then proceeds to refute these nonexistent claims. For example, he indicts the "assumption upon which our paper is based" since we "imply that the editorial policies of the Daily Oklahoman had an influence upon the results of the 1980 presidential campaign in Oklahoma" (p. 43). Such an assumption was never made in our essay. In fact, we pursued an inductive method of inquiry explicitly stated as a "case study assessing the persuasive editorial trends of one isolated medium" (p. 27). Furthermore, we state in our concluding paragraph that our "investigation did not attempt to measure the reader's actual attitude change/reinforcement as a result of exposure to political editorials in the Daily Oklahoman" (p. 40). While we did allude in our final sentence to the "loud and clear" voice of the Daily Oklahoman, this was a mere literary device and certainly not the crux of our preceding analysis.

There are additional logical flaws in Harper's response. As he reviews the findings of Prisuta (1973), Gregg (1965), and McCombs (1967); Harper purports that there is nothing in this research "to suggest that the editorial policy of a single newspaper, in a brief time frame, will set a tone for an ensuing campaign or that it will impact upon voting patterns in a presidential election" (p. 45). For the most part, this research indictment is irrelevant to our essay. First, we never argue that the Daily Oklahoman "set the tone" for anything. Rather, we argue that international incidents could have re-shaped the campaign (pp. 27-28). Second, as previously mentioned, we did not claim to measure voter response to isolated newspaper editorials.

Harper's criticism of the methodology employed in this study suffers from an over-zealous and unrealistic concept of content analysis. He claims, essentially, that our content analysis is superficial and non-systematic, yet he neglects two important matters of research. First, he fails to realize that a detailed explanation of our content analysis would be impossible to include in a journal length

article. Second, regardless of the pretense of objectivity, all content analysis involves certain research judgments. We made these research judgments in what we believe to be an honest, context-explicit manner.

Overall, we were disappointed in the manner in which this article-response was handled. We would hope that prospective journal reviewers would set forth and abide by clear ethical and logical standards.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>"The Role of the Reviewer and Other Ethical/Logical Considerations: A Rejoinder to Paul Harper"</i>	
Author(s): <i>Robert A. Vartabedian & Laurel Klinger Vartabedian</i>	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: <i>Journal of the Oklahoma Speech - Theatre - Communication Association (Fall, 1985)</i>

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents</p>	<p>The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Check here For Level 1 Release: Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) and paper copy.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sample</i></p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sample</i></p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> </div>	<p>Check here For Level 2 Release: Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but <i>not</i> in paper copy.</p>
	Level 1	Level 2	

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here →
please

Signature: <i>Donell Bustow</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>President, Oklahoma Speech Theatre Comm. Assoc.</i>	
Organization/Address: <i>University of Central Oklahoma Dept. of Theatre Arts Edmond, OK 73034</i>	Telephone:	FAX:
	E-Mail Address:	Date:

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:	<i>Acquisitions</i> ERIC/REC 2805 E. Tenth Street Smith Research Center, 150 Indiana University Bloomington, IN 47408
---	---

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4305

Telephone: 301-258-5500
FAX: 301-948-3695
Toll Free: 800-700-3742
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov